

Middlesex Coalition for Children

Testimony of Izzi Greenberg of Middlesex Coalition for Children in Support of Raised Bill 155, An Act Concerning the Allocation of Low Income Housing Tax Credits

Housing Committee of the Connecticut Legislature, March 1st, 2016

Thank you to the leadership and members of the Housing Committee for this opportunity to provide written testimony. My name is Izzi Greenberg and I am the director of the Middlesex Coalition for Children, a group working to improve outcomes for low-income children and children of color in Middlesex County.

I am writing today to testify in favor of Raised Bill 155, An Act Concerning the Allocation of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). Connecticut's LIHTC program is currently being operated in violation of state and federal fair housing laws, and this bill works to bring Connecticut into compliance with these civil rights obligations.

Connecticut is one of the most segregated states in the country, racially, ethnically, and socio-economically, and Middlesex County is no exception. The result of this segregation is that Blacks and Latinos are at a much greater risk of being isolated from opportunity structures, like fully-resourced schools and safe neighborhoods. We know from fifty years of social science research that access to such benefits is one of the major factors leading to better life outcomes across a variety of indicators of well-being.

The negative effects of concentrated poverty are well known, and the state has an opportunity in this bill to bring balance to our extremely imbalanced state.

The LIHTC program is a great tool for creating safe affordable housing for low-income families. But if those neighborhoods have nothing to offer the children and families living there, we have failed. We have a responsibility to create more than attractive units. We must think of the whole family, the whole community, and provide housing opportunity for low-income families to live in towns that will better their children's education, and their family as a whole, while at the same time, continuing to invest in the economic development of all communities across the state, especially those which are struggling.

The concentration of LIHTC in low opportunity areas severely limited housing choices for low-income families of color for the last three decades. It is time that we reorient this program to make those choices possible, while also dedicating resources to revitalizing housing in lower opportunity areas.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Izzi Greenberg
Executive Director